

Steven D. Jansen
Village President
Ph: 262/886-7202
Home Ph: 262/886-9189
sjansen3@wi.rr.com



MUNICIPAL OFFICE
2801 89th Street
Sturtevant, Wi 53177
Ph: 262/886-7202
Fax: 262/886-7205
www.sturtevant-wi.gov

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State of the Village address

Fellow Trustee's, Staff, Village employees & residents,

Well, another year has past & it's time to review the past year & also plan ahead for the next term.

I'm pleased to report that the State of our Village is in good shape. We all recognize the challenging times we live in. Despite that, I believe we as a community have made great strides in the past year. It should be our goal to continue the strides we've made.

We have seen many changes the past year from sale of the water utility, improved & more comprehensive financial reporting, new waste hauler, combined dispatch services with Mt. Pleasant, completion of the new depot, to the continued growth, both commercially & residentially.

I want to compliment our staff for doing a great job. I know at times we can have you all going in 10 different directions. Thanks for all of your dedication & professionalism in helping to make our Village a better place. We, as a part time board, do appreciate all that you do. Thank-you!

As we move forward into this next term, it's important to lay out a plan to keep things moving in the right direction. All of us working together & agreeing to disagree at times, that we can fulfill the challenges that lie before us.

Let us begin.

Finance & Budgetary, Chairperson Daryl Lynaugh

Daryl, you & your committee should continue to be diligent with all Village expenditures. We've made great strides in the past year in this regard. It's imperative that your committee hold departments funding within the set budget. Our goal should be to continue to pay down our general fund deficit. We know more work still needs to be done in that area. At least we've stopped the bleeding with regards to the red ink & things are heading in the right direction.

Putting together next year's budget will present challenges unto itself. We must keep in mind that levy limits of one sort or another will be in place. We must be prudent & discriminatory in how we set expenditures. We must also look at ways to become more efficient in areas that can be. Everything must & should be looked at. No sacred cows! Working with staff, we can continue building on the good works that we've already accomplished.

Public Safety & Health, Chairperson Chris Wright

Chris, Welcome! You & your committee, working with Director Scola, need to identify the public safety needs of our growing Village. Our Village has always prided itself in the fact that we have been able to provide our own public safety services. That goal should continue. Within our Police Department, we have quality professionals. We need to encourage them to enforce our Village ordinances, whether it be speed control, too public nuisance, we need better enforcement of the laws that are already on the books. Our Police officers also should be encouraged to build relationships with our Village youth & residents. Our Fire department is a young department by many standards. We need to encourage them also to get out into the Schools & community to teach the dangers of fire & teach basic first aid to all our young kids. Prevention through education should become a standard operating procedure for both of our departments. We pride ourselves on being a safe Village, we need to keep it that way. Health services are contracted through the Caledonia, Mt. Pleasant health department. We need to do a better job of informing our citizens the availability of those services. Moving forward, we need better clarification & understanding as too services purchased. Good luck to you!

Storm & Wastewater, Chairperson John Johnson

John, we know the changes that we've been through with regards to your committee. With the successful sale of the Water Utility to the City, our focus now can be directed towards storm & wastewater. Storm water is becoming a more important issue with water quality. While many of these changes are state & federal mandated, unfunded by the way, we must continue down the road that these mandates under the federal clean water act require. In order to continue with growth in our Village we are left with little choice. As with storm water, changes within waste water have happened also. A change to a flat residential billing has caused some uneasiness within our Village. Through education & communication those issues should abate with time. We still have challenges that lie within both those utilities. We need to cut back on the transfers within those utilities to the general fund. Our goal should be in a few years to eliminate them completely so that our utilities will have sufficient cash reserves to do the needed maintenance on our existing systems. Inflow & infiltration issues still remain despite the north side rehabilitation project. We need to identify where & why, when we have heavy rains that our wastewater system spikes like it does & correct those deficiencies. With the sale of the water utility, it should free up some manpower within public works to help correct those deficiencies.

Public Works & Capital Improvements, Chairperson Gary Johnson

Gary, DPW plays a very important function within our Village. From street maintenance, snow plowing, yard waste and a whole lot of other functions. It should be your committee's goal, working with the DPW supervisor, to set a list of priorities that you would like to see accomplished. One goal that comes to mind is the condition of our ball diamonds. If we truly like to see our ball fields & parks turned into the crown jewels of our Village, we then need to invest the time, labor & effort that would go into making that happen. Parks can have a positive impact on our community. It should be your committee's role to guide DPW to that conclusion. A complete review of the functions & duties of our DPW may be in order now with the sale of the water utility. I believe there is room in that department for better efficiencies & use of manpower. Our capital improvement plan is just that. While we've taken some small steps this year to begin working at many of the deficiencies, we know we have a long ways to go. Yes, we know that money plays a huge part in what we can accomplish. However, we need to structure a plan of road resurfacing & sidewalk repairs because of the fact that those needs are screaming for our attention throughout the Village. It's time to make those investments & get the work done.

Administration, Personal, Policy & Legal, Chairperson Jerry Klinkosh

Jerry, thanks for accepting this new challenge. You & your committee should continue the work that Mr. Lynaugh started in achieving labor peace with the Unions. Tonight we approved the contract for the Police officers. That is one step in this process. I encourage you to get up to speed with the other happenings as soon as you can. Once labor contracts are settled, you can turn your efforts to other needs. A review of ordinances is in order. We have many that need codification, updating or repealing. That in itself will be a very time consuming task. A step at a time, a chapter at a time. I'll also look for your committee to update the Villages personal manual. It's been some time since that revision has taken place. I'll also look for you to work with the Village Administrator to develop policy goals for the upcoming term. Personnel decisions as far as staffing levels throughout our Village get more difficult each year. It's important that we strike a balance to ensure that the resident's needs are being taken care of & responded too.

Economic Development & Redevelopment, Chairperson Gary Johnson

Gary, no doubt that our Village has seen its share of new development. Being that you also sit on the planning commission, you have seen this first hand. I applaud the use of the Design review committee. This definitely has improved the planning process & brought us higher end development that we all can be proud of. With your committee members, Daryl & Jerry sitting members of the CDA, we still are capable of TID improvements for the Village. Our TID district is one the most successful in the State of Wisconsin. It's important that we continue to build off of that. With our new building standards in place, we will continue to see better & more useful places for businesses to grow. I'll look for your committee to become more aggressive to begin to attract the types of businesses that our residents, old & young, will enjoy. We've all known the need for a full service grocer for our Village. Time has come to see that happen. Redevelopment opportunities do exist, but we know they don't come easy. Somehow, we need to develop a plan to start seeing this take place. Our Highway 11 corridor study is a good first step. We need to figure out ways to begin the changes that are outlined within that study. Highway 11 is the gateway to & through our Village. We need to investigate State & Federal programs that may be out there to begin this process. None of this can happen soon enough, for we all are good at identifying the areas & buildings that need to go & replaced with buildings that are useful & fill the needs of our growing community.

Community Events, Beautification & Culture. Chairperson Linda Busha

Linda, we have seen many good changes the past couple of years with your hard work & determination in upgrading our parks. Parks are a staple of ones community. You have helped us all understand this. For years are parks had become worn down & outdated. We've made strides in this area & you can see the difference. Your goals should be to continue this work as much as possible. Parks need to be safe gathering places for families & children to enjoy. We must also recognize that needs & wants change. For too long I've heard the need for a skateboard park. Kids nowadays are searching for positive outlets to enjoy there sport of choice. I propose that your committee look at creating a skateboard park at South Park. Very few residents play tennis. We should look into upgrading the tennis court at North Park & use the South Park tennis court for skateboard activities. The goal would be to elicit young people to help plan & build this park. By doing so you in a sense are giving them "ownership" of the park. Other communities that have done this have found this to be very successful. We need to start.

Fireman's park has a chance to be a great park. With the improvements underway, we will see that. Step by step we will get there. As far as community events go, this summer offers some exciting things for the residents to partake in with the celebration of our 100th year. Fireman's park will play a huge role in those events. The July 3rd fireworks program this year will be a good test in finding out the appetite for creating an alternate funding source for future years. I also would like to see your committee explore a Village wide tree planting program. Trees bring beauty & value to ones neighborhood. We all can see the difference from areas that do & those that don't. I also encourage your committee to continue looking for alternative funding sources to help see some of these projects completed. I want to thank the Beautification committee for all their hard works & efforts throughout our Village.

In closing, I'll take a second to wish all of us success. Working collectively, we can achieve some of what I outlined tonight. We need to always remember who we represent. Treat those who may be adversarial towards us with respect & understanding. They too have a voice that needs to be heard. I look forward to what this board can & will accomplish. We should all be proud of the things we have done & will get done. We need to continue the spirit of cooperation with one another. Continue to be fair to each other, encourage participation & friendly debate. Someday we will see a new group sitting here. We need to leave our Village in better shape than when we arrived. The challenges & issues don't go away. It's up to each & every one of us to make sure those decisions we embark upon will have a lasting & positive impact within our Village.

Respectfully,
Steven D. Jansen
Village president

